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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3940th meeting of the Security Council, held on 6 November 1998 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Guinea-Bissau", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council welcomes the agreement reached on 1 November 1998, in Abuja, between the Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta during the 21st Summit of the Authority of the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (S/1998/1028, annex). In this context, the Council commends the mediation efforts of ECOWAS and of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), and their respective Chairmen, and recognizes the role of other leaders, in particular the preponderant role of the President of the Gambia, in the negotiations that led to that agreement.

"The Security Council affirms its firm commitment to preserve the unity, sovereignty, constitutional order and territorial integrity of Guinea-Bissau.

"The Security Council considers the agreement to be a positive step towards national reconciliation and lasting peace in Guinea-Bissau. The Council calls upon the Government and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta to respect fully their obligations under the Abuja Agreement and the Praia Agreement of 26 August 1998 (S/1998/825). The Council welcomes, in particular, the decision immediately to put in place a Government of National Unity and to hold general and presidential elections not later than the end of March 1999.

"The Security Council takes note of the agreement regarding the withdrawal from Guinea-Bissau of all foreign troops and of the simultaneous deployment of the interposition force from the Military Observer Group of ECOWAS (ECOMOG), which will take over from the withdrawn forces. The Council calls upon all States to provide voluntarily technical, financial and logistical support to assist ECOMOG to carry out its mission.

"The Security Council appeals to States and organizations concerned to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and refugees.

It calls upon the Government and the Self-Proclaimed Military Junta to continue to respect relevant provisions of international law, including humanitarian law, and to ensure safe and unimpeded access by international humanitarian organizations to persons in need of assistance as a result of the conflict. In this regard, it welcomes the decision to open the international airport and the sea-port at Bissau.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of the matter."